

Healthy democracy depends on the masses having access to diverse information and viewpoints. But the government "of, by, and for the people" seems on the verge of serving privileged private interests--corporate profits--at the expense of the public interest--mass media availability of diverse information and viewpoints necessary for meaningful democracy. (This is hardly surprising, since government officials often come from and return to high-powered positions in the corporate world.) As media ownership consolidation steamrolls ahead, the likelihood of views other than corporate-friendly, monied-interest ones diminishes, and the people are further marginalized. Yes, we still have a perfunctory role to play, voting for one of two candidates beholden to corporations and wealthy donors--not ordinary citizens--or writing futile comments such as this one. But the substantive workings of our system are inaccessible to the ordinary person. It is profit, it seems, not the people, that rules. By allowing increased concentration of media ownership the FCC, guardian of the public interest, will insure that the public will have a narrower range of information and cultural/creative diversity via mass media; that our ability to participate meaningfully in our own governance by making fully informed decisions is decreased as the range of information and viewpoints available in mass media is further narrowed; and that telecommunication corporation profits are enhanced at the expense of local operations and the public interest. The outcome is predictable, as usual in matters where profits and the public interest collide.

Thank you, Commissioner Copps, for your work trying to involve the public in an issue which should be about protecting the public interest and its implications for our democracy.